

## People Enjoying Nature



## Year 1 Report

## Introduction and Background

People Enjoying Nature is an outreach project within the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership. The project aims to give individuals who are dealing with mental health and/or social isolation issues the opportunity to get involved in supported activity sessions in the Pendle Hill landscape. These supported sessions will allow participants to learn new skills and get involved in a range of new activities which may also link in with other PHLP activity and projects. We hope to evaluate the benefits these sessions have on the participants, in terms of general enjoyment; mental health and well-being; social networking and skills gained.

The PHLP are working in partnership with NHS Lancashire Care Foundation Trust East Lancashire Community Restart Rural Development on this project. Community Restart is a forward thinking service that is dedicated to improving quality of life, promoting opportunities and improving the outcomes for people across Lancashire. They work in partnership with people who access the service, carers, mental health specialists, employment provides and environmental agencies to provide the opportunities and community connections for individuals to improve their health and well-being. They support individuals who have mental health issues and/or suffer from social isolation both on an individual basis and by setting up and supporting groups and projects in local communities. It was recognised in the development of this project that these connections will enable the service to advertise the PEN project, signpost and register individuals on the sessions, which would be a huge advantage to the project as a whole.

To better plan for the PEN project, we organised and delivered a 12 week pilot programme over summer 2017. This pilot was a great success, and allowed us to trial transport provision, activity content, sites and gather feedback from participants. An evaluation report was produced, which also included lessons learned and tips for the future.

## PEN Project Plans

For years 2, 3 and 4 of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership there are three separate blocks of activity sessions planned between March and October (each block expected to include one session per week for 6 weeks) and then 4 stand-alone sessions between November and February. In Year 1 we planned to run two separate blocks of activity between June and October, followed by 4 sessions between November and February.

We recognised early on that transport is a large barrier for many people accessing the landscape and so, as in the pilot project, we will aim to work with The Little Green Bus Company as much as possible in providing transport for the sessions. If Little Green Bus Company can't provide the transport, we will work with a local commercial bus company.

## Overview of Year 1

We held two activity blocks in year 1, because the Landscape Partnership only started in April (in future years we will hold 3 activity blocks). These were followed by one session in December and 3 in February. All the sessions took place on Thursday afternoons from 1pm – 4pm. Having sessions at the same time each week offers routine and structure to the participants and on a practical level, are also easier to advertise. Little Green Bus Company provided transport from 2 or 3 pick-up points to the site of each session.

Date	Activity	Venue	Facilitator	No. of participants
14 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	Making bat boxes and learning more about British bat species	Whitehough Outdoor Centre, Barley	Jayne Ashe	5 (5 new)
21 <sup>st</sup> June 2018	Summit Stones Workshop	Clarion House, Roughlee	Henrietta Armstrong	9 (6 new)
28 <sup>th</sup> June 2018	Himalayan balsam pulling	Spring Wood	Jayne Ashe	12 (5 new)
5 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Artist in residence (archaeology)	Malkin Tower Farm	Nastassja Simensky	17 (8 new)
12 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Archaeology session	Malkin Tower Farm	Rick Peterson, Prof Charles Orser and archaeology students on IFR excavation	11 (0 new)
19 <sup>th</sup> July 2018	Big Butterfly count and making insect hotels	Spring Wood	Jayne Ashe and Alison Cross	11 (1 new)
13 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	Bushcraft/fire lighting; fungi walk	Spring Wood, Whalley	Alison Cross and Jayne Ashe	11 (1 new)
20 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	Walk - Pendle Sculpture Trail	Barley (along the Pendle Sculpture Trail)	Jayne Ashe	11 (3 new)
27 <sup>th</sup> September 2018	Practical habitat management and seed sowing	Barley	Sarah Robinson and Jayne Ashe	13 (4 new)
4 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	Painting rocks for Meet You at the Top event	Whitehough Outdoor Centre	Jayne Ashe	10 (0 new)
11 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	Foraging Walk	Chatburn	Adrian Rose	5 (1 new)
18 <sup>th</sup> October 2018	Building bird boxes and making bird feeders	Spring Wood	Jayne Ashe	11 (0 new)
13 <sup>th</sup> December 2018	Making natural Xmas decorations	Whitehough Outdoor Centre	Jayne Ashe	9 (1 new)
14 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	BTO National Nest Box Week - making bird boxes and feeders	Spring Wood	Jayne Ashe	13 (9 new)
21 <sup>st</sup> February 2019	Summit Stones and walk	Brierfield - Higham	Jayne Ashe	8 (4 new)
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2019	Willow Weaving	Higham Village Hall	Creative with Nature	11 (2 new)

Table1. Dates, activity content, venues, facilitator and numbers of participants for each PEN session in Year 1

Total number of individuals engaged with in year 1: 50

Total number of attendances: 167

## Session Content

The plans for some of these sessions were to involve other ongoing project activity, across as many different PHLP projects as possible. This resulted in links with Community Archaeology, Pendle Summit, Wild About Pendle Hill and Pendle Woodlands and Invasive Non-Native Species. Other sessions mixed in with National themed weeks, e.g. Big Butterfly Count, BTO's National Nest Box Week or brought in external facilitators e.g. foraging with Adrian Rose and willow weaving with Creative with Nature.

## Feedback

Feedback was predominately obtained through verbal conversations and photos, as well as completion of 'feedback bubbles' earlier on in the year. We also worked with Huckleberry Films to film a short film about the PEN project, which will be used to advertise the sessions. (See film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nMTPtckXqjw&t=47s>)

Key pieces of feedback were received at the PEN celebration event which took place on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October in Sabden. Participants were invited to this session to discuss the positives and negatives of the PEN sessions, and any changes that could be made to make the sessions even better.

Feedback included:

- Thursday sessions are working well for most participants
- Would be happy for a few weekend one off days
- Bus is working
- Communication not always consistent – e.g. through PHLP or Community Restart
- Participants have enjoyed the sessions and found them beneficial:
  - Change to normal environment
  - Some participants are now exploring new places and walking more
  - Socialisation – meeting new people
  - They have told others about the skills and knowledge that they have learned
  - All would recommend sessions to others.
- Sessions they have enjoyed:
  - Fungi ID
  - Archaeology sessions
  - Creative sessions
  - Bushcraft
  - Making feeders and bird boxes
  - Foraging sessions
  - Finding out more about bluebells
  - Balsam pulling
  - Broadcasting seeds
  - Including walks in sessions
- Ideas for future sessions
  - Dry stone walling
  - Heritage based sessions
  - Willow weaving
  - River session – litter picking
  - Planting
  - Dead hedging
  - Bats and bird watching

- Wildlife tracking

## Evaluation

I have evaluated key areas of the PEN sessions below:

- Partnership with East Lancashire Community Restart Rural Development:
  - The partnership between ourselves and Nick Alderson at Community Restart has continued to work effectively and efficiently. Nick still provides me with the session numbers beforehand, and contacts the participants before the sessions to remind them about times and any other information needed. Toward the end of the year, Nick's job role changed which means going forward he will have more time to participate in the PEN sessions himself.
- Provision of transport:
  - For a small number of sessions, the bus left pick up points too early, and so some participants missed out. However that was resolved and the majority of journeys ran smoothly and on time. Going forward, there may be some changes in pick up points to make it easier for the bus to wait. A meeting was held toward the end of 2018 between ourselves and the Little Green Bus, which was beneficial and I would recommend doing the same every year.
- Session activity:
  - The activities within the sessions were engaging and enjoyable for the participants, particularly the hands on activities and walks. Linking in sessions with other Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership projects gave participants more information about the whole scheme and generated many interesting discussions. The creative sessions, led by external artists, demonstrated a few minor issues which, going forward, will be better managed. Hosting sessions at different public locations, and linking some of them in with national themed weeks or national campaigns, give participants the opportunity to revisit sites and get involved in different activity.
- Number of participants:
  - The number of participants at each session ranged from 5 to 17, with most between 9 and 12. 17 was more than we would normally allow on a session, and it did have a negative effect because resources were stretched. Apart from a few sessions, most sessions were well attended and the size of group worked well with the session activity. Most sessions also have more participants booked on then actually attend. Participants may not to decide to attend for a number of reasons.
- Time of sessions:
  - All sessions throughout Year 1 took place on a Thursday afternoon. This could limit individuals who work full time or have children to look after, however I don't think that the sessions limit the majority of people we are hoping to engage with.
- Participants
  - Lessons learned from the pilot project advised that more efforts need to be made to engage with a more diverse audience, particularly with those who don't currently access a project which involves being outdoors (e.g. allotment). I think we have seen more diversity throughout Year 1, the number of females attending sessions has also increased. The session are gradually engaging with more people who don't currently get outside on a regular basis.
- Contingency plans
  - Contingency plans are mainly put in place in case of severe weather, and we have been very lucky that the weather on Thursday afternoon is normally very good! Throughout the summer, we had some very hot sessions, and on one occasion I reduced the session time to 2 hours because the venue was very exposed with little shelter to the sun. On another

occasion we had to change the activity, because the session was supposed to focus on bushcraft and lighting a fire, and with the hot weather there was still a fire risk. Later on in the year, forecasted heavy rain and wind prompted me to rearrange a session which involved walking up the hill. The forecast made me change the walk to a lower, shorter route. Even with the bad weather 12 participants turned up, and even though they were disappointed we didn't walk up the hill, they understood the reasons why I changed the session.

## Future Plans

### Tips for the future

- Ensure there is enough engaging activity planned for the session when external facilitators are delivering the sessions. This should be improved by discussing session plans in more details before the sessions.
- Include maximum number of participants for each session with advertising material. Some sessions may be more suited to more participants, others to less. This way Nick can cap bookings for each session when appropriate.
- Continue the efficient communication between PHLP and Community Restart.
- Hold yearly meetings with Little Green Bus to ensure that everything is running smoothly for both partners.
- Focus on some targeted advertising toward BAME community.
- Ensure suitable contingency plans are in place for most of the sessions, in case of bad weather or a last minute issue with original plans.